

JOHN M. AND SARAH
ELIZABETH WRIGHT RITCHIE

1035



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John M. Ritchie was born October 30, 1867 at Heber City, Wasatch County, son of John Ritchie and Sarah McAfee. Married Sarah Elizabeth Wright November 4, 1891. She was born August 27, 1869, daughter of William Wright and Jemima Dands Wright. John died October 8, 1938. Sarah died January 17, 1958.

John M. Ritchie was the eldest of a family of eleven. The family moved to Charleston when he was young where he lived the rest of his life. The family made a living by selling butter and grain at Park City.

He attended the BYU also the University of Deseret and was a teacher in the District School at the age of 24, when he married Sarah E. Wright.

It was New Years day 1897 when he left on a mission to Australia leaving his wife and two small children for two and a half years.

The railroad in this valley was near completion and he was appointed the first express agent. He was elected the first mayor of Charleston.

His living was made from farming and livestock. He was recognized as one of the outstanding horse breeders of the intermountain region. One of his hobbies was horse pulling contests which he often engaged in and won his share of honors.

Most of his time was spent in public service. He served on the County and State Fair Boards for many years. He was county commissioner in charge of roads and

pioneered the first grading and shaping of roads with the borrow-pit in this county. Finding that horse drawn equipment was not adequate, he purchased through the county, the first caterpillar and heavy duty grader.

He was one of a committee that fought for a high school when there was much opposition to it. He staged a one-man fight in Charleston to persuade the people that it should be built in Heber and not on the prairie.

He served Charleston Ward as Bishop for 31 years.

He was a great organizer, a man of much foresight and ability.

When a small child, Sarah, with her parents, and seven brothers and sisters moved to lower Charleston. Her mother died with the ninth child and her father married Mary Baum to whom 16 children were born.

Her childhood days were spent milking cows, cooking, herding sheep, making soap, knitting sox and tending babies.

She attended her father's school in the old McAfee Shop one mile from her home and later three and a half miles to Charleston, walking most of the time.

When 17 years of age she began working in the Charleston Store, owned by her brother-in-law, Joseph R. Murdock, where she worked until her marriage to John M. Ritchie.

She spent 25 years working in the Presidency of the Relief Society, sewing for the dead, and preparing them for burial, cooking for ward parties and entertaining as wife of a bishop for nearly 30 years. Her home was the stopping place for traveling troupes, tramps, salesmen, church and state officials.

John and Sarah were the parents of eight children: Mable, Lacy, Vera, Elden, Clyde, Horace, Verdell, Relva.

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